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Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
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----------045859 071829Z /40
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY LISBON
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 171425

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, PO, ID

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE PORTUGUESE INITIATIVE ON TIMOR

REF: LISBON 4404

1. AS EMBASSY IS AWARE, U.S. HAS ACCEPTED AS FAIT AC-
COMPLI INCORPORATION OF EAST TIMOR INTO INDONESIA, AL-
THOUGH WE DO NOT CLAIM THAT THERE HAS BEEN A VALID ACT
OF SELF-DETERMINATION. REMAINING ISSUES FROM OUR PER-
SPECTIVE INCLUDE WELFARE OF INHABITANTS AND HOPE FOR
CESSATION OF CONFLICT. OUR ESTABLISHED POSITION IS BASED
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ON BELIEF THAT REOPENING THE QUESTION OF THE STATUS OF
EAST TIMOR WOULD ONLY PROLONGTHE CONFLICT, AND INFLICT
FURTHER SUFFERING. WE HAVE ENCOURAGED THE INDONESIAN
GOVERNMENT TO PROMOTE THE WELFARE OF TIMORESE, INCLUDING
ACCESS BY INTERNATIONALLY-RECOGNIZED HUMANITARIAN ORGAN-
IZATIONS. DETAILS OF RECENT VISITS AND PROSPECTIVE OPEN-
ING OF EAST TIMOR TO LARGE NUMBERS OF VISITORS CONTAINED

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SEPARATE CABLE. WE HAVE INDICATIONS THAT GOI PLANNING
PERMIT SOME INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS TO
OPERATE IN EAST TIMOR SHORTLY AND WE WILL CONTINUE TO
PRESS THE GOI TO DO SO. AT THE SAME TIME, A PEACEFUL
END TO THE ONGOING CONFLICT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE WOULD
BE BENEFICIAL TO ALL CONCERNED.
2. THE CONCEPT OF A UN-MANDATED TRUSTEESHIP WITH PORTU-
GUESE AND INDONESIAN-SHARED RESPONSIBILITY COULD WELL HAVE
BEEN AN EFFECTIVE MEANS TO RESOLVE THE MATTER PRIOR TO
1976. SUBSEQUENT EVENTS, HOWEVER, LEAD US TO BELIEVE IT
VERY UNLIKELY POSSIBILITY IN 1978. INDONESIA HAS ANNOUNCED
SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE AREA, ITS POSITION IS RECOGNIZED BY
SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF INTERNATIONAL OPINION, INCLUDING
MOST RECENTLY THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT. IT IS WINNING
THE MILITARY CAMPAIGN, TIMORESE ARE INCREASINGLY (SO FAR
AS WE CAN JUDGE) OPTING FOR INDONESIAN RATHER THAN FRETILIN
CONTROL. THE GOI HAS CATEGORICALLY REJECTED ANY CHALLENGE
TO ITS SOVEREIGNTY, REFUSING TO ACCEPT ANY UN OR OTHER
MISSION TO EAST TIMOR WHICH DOES NOT RECOGNIZE INDONESIAN
SOVEREIGNTY. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, A PROPOSAL FOR
A UN-MANDATED TRUSTEESHIP WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE UNACCEPTABLE
TO THE GOI.

3. WE BELIEVE ANY FORMULA IN THE UN OR ELSEWHERE WITH A
REASONABLE CHANCE FOR SUCCESS WOULD HAVE TO ACCEPT, AT
LEAST IMPLICITLY, INDONESIAN SOVEREIGNTY. SINCE THE
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INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT CONSIDERS THAT AN ACT OF SELF-DETER-
MINATION HAS ALREADY TAKEN PLACE, IT PRESUMABLY WOULD ALSO
NOW FIND UNACCEPTABLE A UN-SPONOSRED PLEBISCITE OR REFEREN-
DUM EVEN ALONG THE LINES OF THE WEST NEW GUINEA PRECEDENT.
WE ARE THUS VERY SKEPTICAL OVER THE PROSPECTS OF "STRUC-
TURING" A UN-MANDATED TRUSTEESHIP "ACCEPTABLE TO ALL
PARTIES".

4. DESPITE THE LACK OF FORMAL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN
THE TWO, WE HAVE OCCASIONAL REPORTS THAT THE INDONESIANS
AND PORTUGUESE ARE IN TOUCH -- SPECIFICALLY AT THE UN --
TO DISCUSS EAST TIMOR. IT WOULD THUS SEEM POSSIBLE FOR
THE GOP TO BROACH THE ISSUE IN SOME MANNER WITH THE GOI
INFORMALLY IN THAT FORUM. IF A GOP PROPOSAL SHOULD
DEVELOPT A BASIS FOR MOMENTUM IN GOP-GOI DISCUSSIONS, WE
WOULD CERTAINLY BE WILLING TO LEND SUPPORT TO SUCH DIS-
CUSSIONS.

5. AS FOR OTHER POTENTIAL INTERMEDIARIES, AUSTRALIA HAS
RECENTLY ADOPTED A POSITION ON EAST TIMOR SIMILAR TO THAT
OF US. MALAYSIA, AS A FELLOW ASEAN MEMBER, WOULD NOT
IN OUR VIEW BE LIKELY TO SERVE AS INTERMEDIARY WITHOUT

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PRIOR GOP ASSURANCES THAT GOAL WAS TO LEGITIMATE
INDONESIAN SOVEREIGNTY UNDER SOME PATINA OF UN APPROVAL.
EEC STATES, HOWEVER, STILL HAVE NOT RECOGNIZED INDONESIAN
ANNEXATION.

6. EMBASSY SHOULD OUTLINE FOREGOING INFORMAL REACTIONS
TO GOP BUT TAKE NO FURTHER ACTION UNLESS INSTRUCTED. VANCE

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